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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**INFORMATION REPORT**

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Life in Czechoslovakia: Prices/Food Availability and
Queues/Imports/Closing Down of Restaurants/Administrative
Employees/ Housing Situation/Furniture/Women Employees/

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1. "The following information [REDACTED] dates through
25X1 August 1953.

Prices

2. "Item

1 m of woolen material for man's suit
woolen swimming suit for women
woolen muffler for women
woolen sweater for women
lady's coat
stockings of artificial silk
'perlon' stockings (artificial fibre)
women's shoes
soles for shoes
hand-made shoes
1 meter of cotton
1 kg of ham
1 kg of sausages
1 kg of mortadella salami
1 kg of ham sausages
1 kg of tinne'd pork
Russian eggs, each
1 tart
1 small portion of Gervais cheese
1 kg of cheese of medium quality
1 box of Swiss cheese, about 150 grams
1 movie ticket

Price in Kcs
(after the Currency Reform)

700 - 900
350.-
120.-
400 - 550
1200.-
80 - 120
160.-
120 - 300
25.-
500 - 800
280.-
160.-
32.-
35.-
35.-
25.-
3.50
24.-
2.-
30.-
11.-
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according to the origin of the film

for an Eastern film	4.-
for a Western film	5.-
1 small bottle of finger-nail polish	18.-
1 rouge of bad quality	11.-
1 rouge of good quality	30.-
1 wedding ring of 14-carat gold	130.-

Note: the buyer is obliged to provide the gold himself

Food Availability & Queues

3. "The following food is hardly ever available: sugar, coffee, chocolate, fruit from southern climes, furs. Vegetables are available in large quantities at Prague, but only a few kinds. The largest queues are for movie tickets for Western films. Most of the women in the queues were 20 - 50 years old. Only at one time did I see a queue before the Darex firm where chocolate was on sale for only that day.

Food Items Imported from the USSR and other Satellites

4. "The following food items were imported from the USSR and other Satellites:
- (a) From Hungary: jams, Hungarian salami, woolen material for men's suits, tinned pork
 - (b) From the USSR: marmalade, sardines, wine and watches
 - (c) From Bulgaria: jam, eggs, tinned meat
 - (d) From Poland: eggs, tinned geese

"[REDACTED] the following slogans in shop windows:

- (a) 'With the social trade for the better living standard of the working people.'
- (b) 'Behind Stalin using the Gottwald way forward toward Socialism'
- (c) 'We are marching forward with the Gottwald and Stalin way'

Closing Down of Restaurants

5. "During the past 12 months [August 1952 - August 1953], the following restaurants in Prague were closed: The Liepert Restaurant was liquidated and transferred over to the former restaurant Pelikan at Prague Prikopy. The Liepert shop was also liquidated because of too many queues, and because the shop was situated in the neighborhood of the Red House where it is prohibited to form groups. The shop was transferred over to the former 'Schiller' textile shop at Prague Prikopy.

Working Standards & Budget of Administrative Employees

6. "Administrative employees are divided into 16 groups, according to the state catalogue. Single employees have been reduced by about 25%. Forced transfer of employees to production work has been stopped, but many clerk typists and [administrative?] officers report for work in the factories voluntarily because of the better wages there. The budget of an administrative officer's family is as follows: A young couple, both employed in offices (bureaus), earn 1500 Crowns per month. They pay 250 Kcs (in the new currency) to sublease a flat. For the dinners in the factory canteen they pay 160 Kcs per month. Supper at home costs 300 Kcs per month; 40 Kcs for cinema tickets; 50 Kcs per month for laundry of linen; 120 Kcs per month for breakfast; 100 Kcs per month for lunches; Sunday dinners for two in a restaurant costs 200 Kcs per month; toilet articles and linen repair cost 50 Kcs per month; 60 Kcs per month for streetcar transportation; 64 Kcs per month for use of State-run bath facilities; small expenses 60 Kcs per month. The rest could be saved for new clothes.

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Housing Situation

7. "In distributing living quarters, a kitchen with a gas installation is not counted as a living room. For one person, only 15 m of space is allotted. It is quite possible that in one flat consisting of four rooms, twelve people are living together. Out of this number, there are likely four small children. A child until he is twelve is counted as half a person. If a family without children makes a request for a flat, they are not entitled to receive a flat with conveniences. Administrative officers are discriminated against in flat distribution in favor of the factory workers. In the following districts of Prague the housing commissions are very often in charge of living quarters: Vinohrady, Letna, Dejvice. It is possible to file a maximum of two petitions for review of a decision of a housing commission. If a person told by the housing commission to leave is not willing to leave the flat voluntarily, he is expelled forcibly. The lodging commission does not inform the landlord of the expelled tenant of its decision. Most of the family members are moved forcibly out of the flat if the head of the family is arrested. Most of the prisoner's property is stolen by the executive organs. Single persons could not have even a one-room flat; they are obliged to live as sub-tenants. Members of the C P receive better flats, mostly in new apartment houses. A request form for a new flat should have answers to the following questions: the name of the petitioner, the dimensions of his old flat, his form of employment, and the reason why he is about to move from his old flat. If somebody leaves his flat for holidays, he is not obliged to report this fact to the SNE, but must write down in the housekeeper's lodging book all important data about his voyage. In this book must be registered the names of all visitors received by sub-tenants who stay in the sub-tenant's flat longer than 11 hours, or, who stay overnight. The housekeeper is obliged to show the lodging book once a month to the nearest State Security Corps station.

Furniture

- 25X1 8. "Most of the furniture [] in the shop windows was of bad quality.

Women Employees

9. "Women employees during 1953 have increased in the following fields: taxi-drivers, bus-conductors, waitresses, saleswomen and factory workers. The men in the factories were transferred to the heavy and mining industries and their places were taken over by women. Most of the women went to work because of lack of money in the household. It is nearly impossible for families to exist on the men's wages alone. There are three all-women orchestras in Prague. The women's salaries are lower than the men's salaries. [] the health standard of the women-workers is very bad.

Movies

10. Soviet movies are very poorly attended although the factories are distributing the cinema tickets to them free of charge. Even the new Czech movies are badly attended. The old Czech movies with the actresses Vlasta Burian or Voskovec or Werich are very well attended. All Western movies are the best attended ones. Tickets for Western movies are sometimes available only on the black market for exaggerated prices up to 30 Crowns each."

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